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A
LETTER
TO A
FRIEND,
TOUCHING
Gods Providence
ABOUT
SINFUL ACTIONS.

In Answer to a Letter Entituled,
*The Reconcilableness of Gods
Prescience, &c.*

And to the *POSTSCRIPT*
of that *LETTER.*

By *J. T.*

*Wilt thou speak wickedly for God? and talk deceit-
fully for him? Job. 13. 7.*

LONDON, Printed for *T. Cockeril* at the three
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LETTER

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Printed and Published by G. B. ...

... in the year 1877

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*A Letter to a Friend, touch-
ing Gods Providence about
Sinful Acts.*

S E C T I.

S I R,

HAVING this Week at *Oxford* met with, *July 27*
and perused the book intituled, *The* 1677.
Reconcilableness of Gods prescience of
Sin, &c. I now address my self, ac-
cording to my promise, to give you my thoughts
of it, and that briefly; being willing to be thrif-
ty and sparing both of your time, and my own.

In the general, I much dislike the stile and terms
therein used; especially those which express God
and his Attributes more like an Heathen *Plat-*
onist, then a Christian Divine. I know not to
what purpose *Plato's* Notions and Terms, which
as he had no certain grounds for, so many times
(I believe) he understood them not himself; I say,
I know not why these should be so affected by
Divines, as if they were ashamed of the No-
tions and Language of Holy Scripture. It was
the Apostles Caution *Coloss. 2. 8.* Beware least
any man spoyl you through Philosophy and vain
deceit: The *Platonists* seem there to be intend-
ed, who were most in repute with the *Gracians*,
and who did Philosophise most about God, and
the Angels, though they had nothing to guide
A them

them in their search of them, but the weak dim lamp of corrupted reason, and the rotten clew of Tradition; which was so often broken, and so ill tyed together again, that it could seldome guide them to truth, and then but uncertainly. It was *Platonick* Philosophy that first corrupted Christian Divinity in the second and third Ages of the Church, and was the Root whence sprang all the ill Weeds of *Pelagianisme*: and I cannot think but they are more or less addicted to *Pelagius*, who in these days would fain have *Plato* baptized and be made a good Christian; yea, and examine some of the most abstruse points of Christianity by *Plato's* principles. Of this kind is that so much dispersed through this Book concerning the Emanations of Gods Nature; Gods seing infinite congruities in things which inclines him to act thus and thus; as if God were some way necessitated by his own disposition to deal with, and dispose of his Creatures as he doth; and hence they measure God by the nature of man, at least by the best men and what is rational and good according to their judgment and affections is thought also to guide the purposes and actions of the infinite God; but the Nature of God, *i. e.* his Being, Substance, and Disposition, (to speak in our language) is not only unknown, but impossible to be known in this World, where we know nothing, but by comparison with the creatures, which are not at all like him, but really infinitely below him; and those negative perfections of infinity, immensity, &c. which we attribute to him are but removing the imperfections of the creatures from
from

from him; and the scriptures also, which give us the only certain knowledge of him, express him according to our capacity; either attributing to him the chiefest perfections of the creatures, or removing from him their imperfections: but they do not declare him as he is in his own Being and Nature. *I am that I am*, or *I am who I am*, was all the name God would give to Moses of himself, whereby (I think) is meant Gods transcendent and singular Being to which nothing is like, and therefore not expressive of him, that identical proposition, *God is God*, or *he is what he is*, though it may not be good *Logick*, the Prædicate not explaining the subject, yet it is good *Metaphisick* and *Divinity*, there being nothing to express God by but himself. His Word and Works express what he is and will be to us, that is, in what tenour and by what Law he will govern his reasonable Creatures; not what his Nature and Essential Properties are; thus when it is said, *God is Lord*, it is not meant of his Being or Essential Property, but of his gracious purposes and promises in Jesus Christ. If God were absolutely free to make or not to make the World, then he was as free to make it in what manner, and to govern it in what order he pleaseth: If God were the infinite and absolute original of all things, then there was nothing which could be a reason or motive to him, to do any thing but what proceeded from his own will, he saw no congruities in things, but made them; nor is there any thing better or worse in respect of Gods ordering things to his ends, (though we in common speech say this and that is best) but

all things are ordered according to the counsel of his Will; they have their connection among themselves, and their conducibility or fitness for his ends all from him. It is from the infinite perfection of God that whatsoever he doth is infinitely wise, holy, just, and good, and becoming himself; not that there are any measure or rules of Wisdom, Goodness, or Justice in things themselves antecedently to the Law and order which God subjected them to; so true is that, *The Will of God is the rule of all Justice*: so it is of Wisdom and Goodness also. It is indeed said in the Schools, that some things are commanded, because they are good in themselves; and some are good because they are commanded; and so some are good antecedently to the Will of God, and some consequently, being made good because he wills them; but this must be understood cautiously, namely, of the promulgated Will, or Law of God, *i. e.* that some things were good and therefore commanded, in respect of that nature and order which God had newly created and established in the World; for having made Men and Angels of such a nature consentaneously to their Creation, he gave them Laws suitable to their Nature, which should therefore be immutable, and the actions and qualitys which were conformed, or contrary to those commands, are said to be good or evil in themselves; because they are founded in, and suited to, the nature and original order of things, and are not to be changed while the present order of things in this World continueth: On the other side some things are
good

good only because they are commanded ; as all the positive institutions of the Old and New Testament ; because they have no necessary connection with the nature and Primitive order of rational creatures, and therefore may be prescribed and limited, prohibited or left indifferent, according to the Wisdom and Pleasure of the great Law-maker, who can make them useful by his grace when he commands them ; and when he doth not promise his grace to make them useful, they can be of no use. But this must not be extended to the natural and essential Will of God ; as if that were guided by the internal qualities of Creatures, when the Creatures and their qualities do absolutely depend upon Gods Will : *Entity* is before *Bonity*, either Metaphysical or Moral ; therefore things must be supposed to have a being in the divine *Idea* and purpose, before they can be apprehended to be good with any degree of goodness ; and the will of God as it is before their being, so much more before their goodness ; and in this sense every thing is good, because God willed it so to be ; and he doth not will any thing because it is good : after the same manner must we understand that Metaphysical Axiome : the *essences of things are eternal* : and there is a non repugnancy betwixt their parts and prædicats, which is eternal, and the foundation of a necessary prerequisite to their actual production *v. g.* It was preredicated to the Creation of Man, that there be no repugnancy in his being a rational creature, else he could never have been made so : that there was no contradiction or inconsist-

Gods Providence

ency between all the predicats and parts of his Being, as now they are, else they could never have been united and reconciled into one essence: and this non repugnancy or suitableness of parts and predicats was eternal and increated, this is to be understood thus, that before the actual production of things, there is presupposed a congruity of their predicats and parts, and aptness for conjunction: It is presupposed in nature, not in time, and so negatively to be eternall, that is, not to begin in any time, but when ever things were made, (though it had been earlier or sooner in infinitum) yet still it must be presupposed in nature, that their parts and predicats were compatible and convenient to be joyned. But the first original of the most simple predicats, and all their congruitys and incongruitys, compatibilities and incompatibilities among themselves, were from the *Architective Idea* of Gods understanding, and the purpose of his will to give them such a Being, and then to compound such things of them as were consistent with that nature he had given them; if there were any natural connections and conveniences of prædicates and the essences of things, or moral congruitys, conformities or decencies in their qualities and actions, and the contrarys of these antecedent to the divine *Idea*, and will, then they are as eternal as God himself and independent of him, then he is not the first cause of all things, not of their essences, and tendencys and inclinations, but only of their actual existence: he indeed brought them forth into the world, but he could make and order them no otherwise then he hath, he brought

brought them forth into the light, but conceived or formed them not in the womb of his Decree or *Idea*, but had his pattern before him from their own independent natures. To return, When God hath made things, there is a harmony and congruity amongst them, and whatever laws he prescribeth them, and in what way soever he governeth them, all is most agreeable to their natures, and the order he hath constituted among them; else he should contradict his own ends and undo his own work in giving them nature and inclinations of one kind, and the overruling them by his Laws and Power another way different from their nature; so that that nature and those inclinations should be given them to no purpose, but there were no foreseen congruities or incongruities in things which should incline God to rule or govern them in this or that manner antecedent to his, own purpose of making them so, any more then those things had had a foreseen Being, antecedent to his Will and *Idea*, by which all things were formed. And thus whatever God hath done in permitting the Fall of Men and Angels, in giving his Son to redeem Man, and whatever he doth or will do in governing and guiding men to their eternall condition, it all proceedeth from his most free and sovereign pleasure, ordering all with infinite Justice and holiness, that is becoming himself, and with infinite Wisdom, that his works should harmoniously conspire to set forth his most infinite excellency, and not to clash and jarr amongst themselves in their tendency to his supream and universal end, though they may be contrary to

each other in respect to the particular subordinate ends to which particular things and actions are directed. But there were no reasons from the things themselves to move him, nor from his own transcendent and incomprehensible Nature to oblige him to take this course and to order his creatures in this manner; nor did he choose this way because it was best, (though we must account it best now he hath chosen and appointed it) but because it was his sovereign pleasure to glorify himself this way. Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Sovereignty and Goodness can no more act *ad ultimum*, then Infinite Power can. If notwithstanding all God did, or will make, his Power can do infinitely more, then notwithstanding all the contrivances and products of his Counsel and Goodness, his Wisdom and Goodness can infinitely vary in the expression of themselves, and that which guideth and boundeth all the exercises of his Power Wisdom and Goodness is his absolute sovereign Will and Pleasure. Having premised this general reflection, I shall come to the main matter of the book, and that I may give my thoughts more distinctly, I shall reduce what I have to say to these four Questions.

1. Whether God doth give a predetermining influence to actions that have sin or deformity annexed to them?

2. Whether it can be defended, that God doth efficaciously concur to all good actions, and not at all to evil actions? whether the former be not as inconsistent with liberty, as if he should concur to the latter?

3. Whe-

3. *Whether there can be any such indifferrent power or influence of God upon the Creature as must be determined by it, and may be used or not used as the Creature pleaseth? as the Author affirms.*

4. *Whether a bare speculative prescience without Predestination or predetermining influx, be more reconcilable with Gods Moral proceedings with men, then his Decree and predetermination is?*

S E C T II.

THE first Question is, *Whether the influence of God upon the Creatures doth determine them to all their actions, and particularly to those that have sin annexed to them?* For the better understanding of this I premise some things.

1. That God had wise and holy ends in suffering sin to enter into the World. None deny that God could have prevented sin in all or in any man if he had so pleased, and therefore it could not have entered into the World unless he had permitted, or suffered it, and he is so holy & good that he would not have suffered it, if it were not for wise and holy ends. Hereby he takes occasion to magnifie his Wisdom and Mercy in redeeming his Elect by the death of his Son, and to magnifie his Power and Grace in changing their hearts, subduing their lusts, and enabling them to overcome the Flesh, the World, and the Devil, and to forgive and bare with them till they come safe to Heaven; on the other side he declareth his Justice and Greatness,

ness in leaving the rest of men to the ways of their own hearts, which they have chosen, and at last justly condemning them for their voluntary apostasie from him, and final impenitency in it: he also discovereth manifold Wisdom and Power in governing the World and every particular person in it and all their actions, notwithstanding their unruly and tumultuous will, and affections. It is true God had no need to declare his Justice, Holiness, Majestie and Wisdom in this way, neither had he need of the manifestations of his creating power in making, or of his bounty and conserving Power in so richly furnishing and setting forth his creatures and all his providences about them; but if the infinite sovereign God pleased to make himself known, then it was consequentially or hypothetically necessary, that he should make intelligent creatures, who might be capable to understand him by his works; if he pleased to shew the exceeding greatness of his goodness in their Creation, it was needful he should make them perfect and innocent: If he had a further design to magnifie free pardoning mercy and restoring-grace in the Redemption and Intercession of his Son, there could have been no place for it unless he had suffered man to fall, and to plunge himself into sin and misery: If he would also shew his Justice and severity against sin; some must be left in their sins, and justly to perish by them: And lastly, if he be pleased to magnifie both his grace and severity in a wise mixture or attemperation, it was necessary that he should neither cut off those whom he intended to leave in their sins as soon as they were

were capable of sinning, nor remove his Elect to Heaven as soon as he had sanctified them; but that he should leave many of both sorts in this World to be objects of the various exercise of his grace and severity. God needeth not the exercise of any of his Attributes *ad extra*, out of himself, being infinitely and eternally happy in, and satisfied with himself; but if he please to exercise and manifest them, it is agreeable to his Wisdom to design objects capable and fit whereupon they may be exercised. Who can shew a reason why God may not permit sin, to make these uses of it for his own glory, as well as effectually to have prevented it in innocent man? seeing he oweth the Creatures nothing; and as his holy Will is the rule, so his glory is the end of all things. *Rom. 9. 22. 33. Rom. 11. 36.*

2. There is therefore no reason for that overscrupulous caution of some, who deny that God hath any will at all concerning sin; or is any way concerned about its coming into, or being in the World: this opinion seems to have been common in *Lombards* time, in so much that he having proposed the reasons on both sides, thought not fit to determine any thing in the point *Lomb. lib. 2 sent. dist. 37. Quest. A.B.C.D.* unless perhaps (which I think more probable) he would not determine, because he, as the rest of the Schoolmen after him, attributed too much to the liberty of mans will; some also of late have took up this opinion, against whom *Dr. Twiss* disputeth strongly *Vin, Gra. lib. 2. part 2: Lib. 2. P. 2. Dig. 4. Lombards* reason is very weak, viz. with *Di. 4.*

out

out him nothing was made, sin is nothing; Ergo, sin was made without God: but we may say, *hic magister communiter non tenetur*. Bonaventure, cited by Dr. Twiss, saith, that in his time it was generally agreed, that God did will sin, sc. by permitting it and ordering it to the end of his own Glory: So also *Alensis sum. Part 2. Qu. 84. Memb. 3. Ar. 6.* And so most of the Schoolmen, the Jesuits not excepted; *Augustine, in Enchir. Ut Deus naturarum bonarum optimus est Creator; ita malarum voluntatum est justissimus ordinator*, and if God did no way will sin, then all sin were accidental and contingent to him; and so the greatest part of his Government of the rational Creatures was a contingent uncontrived thing. The fallen Angels and Man continued but a short space in their integrity, and the fall was contingent, and all their actions natural, civil and moral, so far as either altogether sinful or any way irregular, excessive, or defective, together with all their omissions of duty are accidental contingences to God: so also what is occasioned by them, the punishments of sin both temporal and eternal, all the overruling providences bridling the lusts of men, or guiding them to higher ends: yea, the sending of Christ to redeem the World; and all the co-operations of divine grace in the Elect must be accidental emergences upon present occasions not contrived and ordered in Gods eternal counsels.

3. Though God permit sin and order it for his own glory, yet all agree that he is not the Author or efficient cause of sin, either of the habit or of the act: though the contrary opinion be ascribed

cribed to *Florinus* of old, and to some late Phana-
tical braines, yet no sober Divine ever affirmed
it, for sin as sin, is a defect or want of con-
formity to the Law of God, and this formally
considered hath no efficient cause, but is caused
by the creature, voluntarily omitting or falling
short of its duty; but how to make it clear,
that God governing and influencing all his crea-
tures in all their actions, doth no way incur the
guilt of being the author of their sins is a great
difficulty: in sins of omission the matter is easie,
for there being no act, but the want or pollution
of an act which ought to be, it is apparent they
are caused by the creatures neglect together
with the suspension of divine influence, which
should cause them to act: also the sinful defects
of good actions, being a partial privation of full
conformity to the rule, proceed from the weak-
ness of the creature, God not affording that full
influence which should keep them from all defect;
here therefore is no efficiency: the matter is har-
der in acts, altogether sinful, which have a ten-
dency to an undue object there must be an effi-
cient cause of the act; and if God doth efficiently
concur to the act, how shall he be excused from
any influence upon the defect also?

4. Therefore *Durandus*, and some few others,
deny any efficient concurrence of God to the
acts of the creatures, thinking it is enough that
God hath given them a being and faculties to
act, and all other things requisite, as objects, mo-
tives, opportunity, &c. and doth uphold these
by his conserving power; this is of late revived
by

by *Du Hamel*, de consensu Cap. 4. The. 14. Cum Deus movet creaturam, nihil aliud quam eam in variis locis tuetur & creat, &c. Quid efficiet? utique conservabit eas in tali loco aut tempore juxta earum exigentiam idque erit concurrere cum creatura, This they think freeth God from all communion of sin, seing he only preserveth the creature and its principles of being and operation, and the creature acteth alone, therefore they say further, that this conservation is an universal indeterminate assistance of God, which the creature useth as he pleaseth. *Du Hamel* again *Ibid.* Actio illa Dei qua creat, tuetur, & conservat causam secundam universalis est motio prævia indeterminata. Quid illam determinat? exigentia creature qua sola nec subsistere potest nec agere; &c. But if God only upholdeth the creature in its being and faculties and concurrereth not to its actions, then God doth no more for the creature when it acteth, then when it acteth not; for he upholdeth it in its being and faculties when it acteth not; and then God did no more in the *Caldeans* and *Sabeans* taking away *Jobs* Cattel, in the Lightning that burnt his Sheep, or the Wind that threw down the House upon his Children, then if all these had been quiet and exerted no such act, or then he did in the other neighbours who medled not with his substance: how then could *Job* say, the Lord hath taken away? and yet the Text commends him, In all this *Job* sinned not, nor charged God foolishly, *Job* 1.

5. Others therefore, and that generally, admit

mit, that God doth actively influence the creatures in all their operations, which they call his concurſe with the creature viz. that God doth not only uphold them in their being, but doth alſo aſſiſt them with his power in their acting, and that the creatures having once received their beings and faculties from God, might as well ſubſiſt and continue without his conſervation, as act without his co-operation. *Arminius* as is cited by *Dr. Twiſs* acknowledgeth, that God concurrereth to the act of ſin, and ſaith, that it is neceſſary from the nature of the creatures, from the law of creation, and that therefore the divine moral law prohibiting ſin muſt not take off Gods aſſiſtance to his creatures, which he had engaged himſelf to by the law of creation, before the moral law was given, or ſin was in the World, And our Author ſeemeth to acknowledge as much, when he deſcribeth Gods influence upon ſinful actions to be his affording ſuch a power to the creatures as that they may act or ſuſpend their actions as they pleaſe, if then the creature acteth, it acteth by the virtue and aſſiſtance of that power afforded to it, yet ſeing the creature acteth freely and may refrain acting if it will, and ſin is not an act, but a defect in the action, they think this acquieth God from being any cauſe of ſin: though by the way, I underſtand not why this Author ſaith, that ſome acts are intrinſecally evil, as the hatred of God, &c. when the act of hatred as an act is only the averſation of the mind from an object apprehended as evil: if ſo, it is indifferent to moral goodneſs or evil; if the object be really evil the hatred is good; but if the object be good

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good, the hatred is evil : therefore all the moral qualifications of actions are from without, viz. from the object, end and circumstances, and the natural being of them is indifferent, neither morally good or evil. Nor can I conceive how it helpeth his cause ; for if the act be intrinsically evil, and the power of God concurs to it, how is God excused from being the Author of an evil act, though the creature doth voluntarily abuse his influence ?

6. Thus far most Writers being agreed, it seemeth further highly rational to many, that as the Creature cannot act without Gods assistance, so neither can it move or incline it self to act, or determine it self either to act, or to suspend, to act in this, or that manner, unless God also doth secretly influence, incline, and determine it.

48.32.44 This also our Author admits in actions spiritually good ; but whether he will allow it in natural or civil actions, I know not, but he detesteth it in sinful actions, that God should incline and determine the creature to them, even the matter of them, or the natural act which is the subject of sin ; this he loadeth with all the hard terms that *Julian the Pelagian* used against the Orthodox in those days, which however have more of passion then of argument. *Arminius* also, *ut supra*, earnestly contends for the same, viz. that though God concurs to the act, yet he doth not influence the will : but that he holdeth his power and influence, as it were in suspense, till he know which way the creature will act, and then he is ready to concurr with it, they are very confident that

that God must be the Author of sin, and cannot be consistent with himself, in his Laws and Government; yea, that Heaven and Earth must be mingled together, if God determine the creature to sinful actions: This therefore is the Question now to be explained and proved.

S E C T III.

WHEN we say, God doth predetermine the Creature to sinful actions; we mean only, that he doth incline and guide them to the substance, and matter of the acts, not to the sinfulness which cleaves to them: the acts themselves, as the natural operations of mans understanding and will, or of the inferior faculties (so far as subject to the will) are naturally good, proceeding from the faculties which God hath made, and tending to the use and benefit of man; thus they are from God the Author of all good, and there is neither moral good, nor evil contained in them, as they are the meer exercise of natural faculties, about their natural proper objects: But further, as these faculties come under the Law and Command of God; so they are capable of moral good or evil, by being conformed to, or dissenting from his Law; this is an external relation, or denomination of actions from the respect they have to the Law, neither intrinsecal to them, nor inherent in them: *e. g.*

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An act of hatred is good, as it is an averſation from evil, it is neceſſary for man that he may decline that which ſeems hurtful to him, thus far it is from God as a natural action: when it is exerciſed upon that which God requires him to hate, then it is morally good; and when that is hated, which is commanded to be beloved, then it is morally evil; therefore the moral good and evil of the act of hatred, is but a reſpect to, or denomination from the command, which it obeyeth, or diſobeyeth: God therefore inclineth the Creature to this, and all other acts, ſo far as it is the natural exerciſe of the will towards an appearing evil: but that this act is morally evil, is, becauſe it breaketh the command of God, or tendeth to an object which ought to be beloved; and this proceedeth from the ignorance, or malice of mans heart, God not preventing that error or diſobedience. *By determining the Creatures to their actions,* we mean not, that God doth compel or force them to act; For then their Natures and Faculties would be given them in vain; not that the creatures are meerly Gods instruments in acting; they are his moral instruments, as they are all ſubject to, and uſed in his moral government of the World: they may be called his instruments improperly, as they can do nothing without him, nor nothing, but what he pleaſeth ſhall be done; but they are not proper, and natural instruments without any activity in themſelves, but only acted by God; for then all the diſtinction of natures were vain; what need the diſverſe faculties and virtues, and organs of creatures, if they can do

do nothing with them, but are all used by God, as helpless instruments are by man : but by predetermination we mean, that God in an unconceivable manner doth incline and guide his creatures to every action, as well as help them in acting, and that powerfully and effectually; so that there is nothing acted by the creatures, but what God doth by his power incline and determine them to; this he doth immediately by himself, being every where present, not only with, but in the creatures, and as near to them as their own faculties in respect of place, though not of nature, and he doth this in a way agreeable to the nature of every creature, so as not to be inconsistent with the principles which he hath given them : with natural and necessary agents he so concurrerth and determineth them, that yet they act according to their own inclination : A Stone falls down necessarily from its own gravity : and a Plant grows from its plastick virtue, though both are determined to those actions by God : and creatures that have knowledge, and some power to govern themselves more or less act according to their own inclination, and apprehension, though God incline them to that. Thus as natural agents act from an internal necessary principle, and not as meer Machines and Brutes from their own knowledge and inclinations, notwithstanding predetermination, so men act rationally and freely according to their nature, though always predetermined by God in their actions. If Man acted not freely, his actions were not humane actions, and so not capable of reward and punishment,

not his, but Gods : On the other side, if God can determine natural and sensitive agents without violence to their nature, without superseeding their internal principles; he can also, by his infinite power so determine man to his actions, as to preserve his reason and will inviolate in judgment and liberty, and doth so ordinarily ; though in some extraordinary cases, he doth overrule and overpower them.

I therefore lay down this *Thesis*, That though man act rationally and freely, yet God doth incline and determine him to act by his almighty power. This I shall prove generally of all actions, and particularly of *sinful actions*. Jer. 10. 23. *The way of man is not in himself; It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*, Junius, *Non penes est hominem via ejus*, &c. mans way is not in his power : The Vulgar after the Septuagint, *Non est hominis via ejus* &c. mans way is not his ; If mans ways be not in his power, then it is God that determineth and guideth them : to direct mans steps lyeth mainly in determining him to act, and which way to act ; then *it is not in him that walketh or acteth* ; and experience sheweth how unable men are to determine themselves in ordinary actions, and for extraordinary, the wiser men are to foresee difficulties, and to weigh reasons on every side, the more they hesitate what course to take. And what meaneth that we pray to be directed in every thing, by committing our ways to God, and not leaning to our own understanding, by trusting in him and acknowledging him in all our ways, *Psal. 37. 5.*

Pro. 3. 5.

Pro. 3. 5s 6. If we can determine and guide our selves, if God cannot determine us without overthrowing our nature? for all external providences of opportunities, motives, &c. will not determine or direct us, without an inward influence upon our will: nor yet can there be a concurrence of determining circumstances without a determining power upon these creatures.

Acts 17. 25, 26. He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things, &c. and hath determined before the times, and the bounds of mans habitations.

Where do Men use more liberty then in chusing their dwellings and imployments? yet these were determined from eternity, and then they must be determined in the choise of them, or else they would be uncertain. Again, God giveth men not only their beings, but all things that belong to them, and one thing necessary is, to guide all their actions: the Apostle here proveth, that God must not be worshipped by material Temples, &c. or mans device; because he needeth nothing, but giveth man all things. But it may be said, *Man may chuse whether he will worship him or no, his actions are wholly in his own power; and so God may receive something from him.* This cannot be without God give him all things, even the determinations of his will, to worship him, as well as a law to serve him by. I pass the 28 ver. usually alledged in this Argument, because it speaketh of Gods Omnipresence with men, not of his co operation. *Rom. 11. 36.* of him, and through him, and to him are all things, &c. of God, as the first cause and principle, making and designing them to

himself as the last end; *and through him*, as guiding and carrying them to that end: I observe the Apostle saith, *all things*, thereby excluding nothing; and the occasion of these words was a discourse concerning the rejecting of the *Jews*, the calling of the *Gentiles*. and the final uniting of *Jew* and *Gentile* in one Church with all the Providences, whereby all these things should be brought about; wherein are contained all the moral actions of men, and those which should be least determined by God; and yet *all are of him*, either as the Author, or as the Designer of them, and all are designed to the end of his glory; and if he hath designed all things to himself to a certain end, as the sovereign disposer of all (as the context from v. 32 imports) then all must be *through him*, i. e. brought to pass by him, and ordered to his ends; as he that wills the end must will the means also; so he that brings about the end must use the means also, and influence them: nor may it be said, that Gods foreseeing mens sins, the *Jews* rejecting of Christ, which is the instance here, did thereupon resolve to make this an occasion of calling the *Gentiles*, and the furtherance of it, and their call at last, a means of recalling the *Jews*; for the Apostle saith v. 32 *God hath concluded them all in unbelief*, that he might have mercy upon all. *Συνέκλεισε* hath shut, or locked them up in unbelief: and there are innumerable other actions which must be determined by God, to make this means work to this end; and why not their unbelief also? and how are all designed by him, brought to pass by him
for

for himself; if not the *Jews* unbelief, as well as their rejection? or how else doth this clear Gods proceedings, which is the Apostles intent, *viz. that God is the sovereign first cause and worker of all things for himself as his last end.* What needs this to silence carnal reason, unless God determine to all actions both good and evil? I further argue *ad hominem*, if God concur to every act, then he also moveth and determineth the will to act; for the Creatures having a Being, and Faculties, Objects, and all things requisite to act; is as able to act without any influence from God, as to determine it self whether it will act or no without him; why may not the Object, and Motives, and Natural Principles be sufficient to the operation without God, as well as to the determination? surely we find most weakness in this: we are apt not to regard the object, not to heed the motives, not to be moved by them, to forget them, and after consideration to be uncertain which way to take: moreover, if the creature may act without Gods concurrence, why may it not exist without actual conservation? seeing Being is a more stable thing then the actions of mutable faculties: if God could make creatures independent in their operations, (as this Author contends) why may he not make them independent in their being, *i. e.* give them a being, which shall need no more influence from himself? and this to do be as great a perfection in God, as to do the other? and so God having given the Creatures their being and faculties, and all things convenient for them, must have put them out of his own hands;

can work no more upon them, unless miraculously overruling the principles he had given them, and breaking the order which he had made. He requireth us to prove, *That it implyeth a contradiction, that the Creatures should be independent*, (I suppose he meaneth in operation) which is not reasonable; for in most truths we cannot easily shew their connection with the first truths, so as to reduce the contrary *ad absurdum*, though we confess that every falsity doth imply and may at length be reduced to a contradiction. Yet I shall attempt it in two Reasons.

1. If a creature may be independent in its existence, so as to need no conserving power from God: then a creature may be so made, as that God cannot unmake or annihilate it; and that a creature should receive its whole being from God, and he be the absolute first, and original cause of that Being, and yet not be able to take away that Being, is (I think) a contradiction. How is he the absolute fountain of being, if any thing can uphold a Being, not only without him, but even against his will and power? I prove the consequence: Annihilation is only the taking away of a Being, or making the thing cease to be; and therefore cannot be wrought by a positive action, but meerly by withdrawing that which upholdeth the being: now then if God do not uphold the Being of the Creatures, he cannot annihilate them by withdrawing that sustentation, and therefore not at all: In like manner, If a creature may be independent in operation, then God cannot hinder the operations

of the creatures; he cannot hinder them by a positive act; for a positive act must have a positive term and effect, not the meer hindrance or not being of an act: he must therefore hinder them only by suspending his influence or not at all: if you say, he may destroy the faculty, that also must not be done by a positive act; but by subtraction of influence: now that God having given his Creatures faculties to act, should not be able to hinder them, and yet be the author of life and breath and all things, is surely very near a contradiction, as well as against Scripture, and experience, which tell us that God hindreth men in their designs and actions, by hiding Wisdom from their eyes, by causing them not to see things, and not to find their hands, &c.

2. If the Creature depends upon God for assistance to its action, but not to be determined and moved by him to act, then the Creature determineth God whether he shall assist or no, *viz.* to assist if it please to act; and to forbear if it be not minded to act. And thus a great part of Gods Providence over men shall depend upon men; which is a contradiction to his Being the first mover and sole Governor of all. And further, if the Creature determine God to its assistance, and to what kind of assistance he shall give according to the nature of the act, which it will exert, then the act of the Creature is in nature before the assistance of God: for God waiteth to see which way the Creature will act, before he affordeth his assistance: and then the second
cause

cause acteth in nature before the first, though it cannot act without him; and the first cause is subordinate to the second in Operation, and must concur as an inferiour less principal cause: As when the principal Workman begins to move and act, the less principal that are to help him, and to concur to the same act, (suppose to lift or draw) take there hint, when to act with him. But to ascribe any of these things to God maketh him no first cause, and so implies a contradiction. But that God determineth the will of Man or causeth it to act, as well as assisteth it in acting, I thus prove; when God assisteth the will in acting, he is the cause of the Act, as well as the will; not partial, for then the act is partly Gods, and partly mans; therefore a total cause, not co-ordinate; for their cannot be two total co-ordinate causes of the same act, that should equally and totally cause that act; therefore God is a superiour cause, and the creature subordinate to him: Now if God do cause the act of the will as a superior total cause: What is this but to cause the will to act? and that is to determine it: he doth not produce the act in the will, as a meer passive power; but together with it produceth the act, as a Superiour cause. Wherein lyeth this superiority, unless he cause the will to act? how else is he in any sort above and before the will in the act? and this is the previous determining influence I was to prove. *Vid. Twiss. Vin. Gra. Lib. 2. Digr. 8.*

In the next place it is to be proved directly, That God doth predetermine man to the matter of *sinful actions*, though he concurrerth not to the *vitiosity of them*: Give me leave to premise one consideration, viz. If God predetermine natural agents to their natural actions, (as is generally acknowledged) and yet concurrerth not to the defects of them, or to the *monstrosity* or deformity of their effects, though he be with the creatures the cause of the effects themselves; why may we not with the same reasons say, that God doth predetermine man to those actions, wherein he is morally defective, and yet God be no cause of, or chargeable with that defect? and further it is confessed, that God doth concur to the act both in naturals and morals, to which the defect cleaveth; So that he is a cause, a total cause of that act, together with the creature: Now, If the defective action may really proceed from God as a proper efficient cause, and that most principally, and yet the defectiveness not be ascribed to him, how shall he be chargeable with those defects and deformities, meerly for inclining and determining the creature to act, without which it can no more determine it self, then it can act without his concurrence? But I prove it by Scripture: God sent *Joseph* into *Egypt*, when his Bretheren sold him: He hardened *Pharaoh's* heart, when *Pharaoh* hardened it: It was of God that *Elie's* Sons hearkened not to their Fathers counsel: Nor *Rehoboam* to that of the Old Men: God gave to *Absolon* his Fathers Wives, and when he lay with them on the House top, God did it: He commanded the evil Spirit to deceive *Ahab*, and said he should prevail

prevail: The *Affyrians* and *Caldeans* were his Rod, yet they sinned in spoyling *Israel*: The
Acts 4. 27. *Jews* and *Pontius Pilate* in killing our Saviour,
 28. did but what God had determined should be
 done; and those *Jews* who were disobedient to
1 Pet. 2. 8. Christ, were before appointed to it: These Scrip-
 tures and the like do at the first appearance hold
 forth some Ordination and prevalent Influence of
 God upon sinful actions, and not only an idle per-
 mission, or such a co-operation as leaveth the
 creatures indifferent to act, or not to act: But
 I shall single out two or three of these instances,
 and argue from them.

1. In the case of *Pharaoh*, It is eight times
 said, that God would and did harden his heart,
that he might not let Israel go; from *Exod.* 4. 21.
 to the end of that Story, *Chap.* 14. where it is
 to be observed; that when God sent the first
 message to him, he foretold *Moses*, that *he would*
harden Pharaohs heart, that he should not hearken
Ex. 7. 13. *to all the signs he should do*: and afterwards when
 9. 12. it was said, *God did harden his heart*, it is twice
 added, *as he had said unto Moses*: here is a pre-
 diction, that God would harden him, and his
 actual hardening was reported as the fulfilling
 of that prediction; sure this implyeth more,
 then, that God would permit him to harden him-
 self if he would, and that he knew he would do
 it. But the Author sayth, *The Hebrew Phrase*
has a more soft signification, and might be more
mildly expressed; Yet Interpreters generally ren-
 der it by the Term *hardening*: And we shall
 see how the best Interpreter (the Scripture it
 self)

ſelf) underſtandeth it. It is alſo ſaid that *Pharaoh*
hardened his own heart. i. e. he reſolved not to
 let *Iſrael* go, and to that end he ſtrengthened
 himſelf by all the reaſonings and pretences that
 he could, that he might not be moved by the
 meſſages and miracles of *Moses*; but whether
 or no God might influence in guiding and inclin-
 ing him, let the Apoſtle be judge *Rom. 9. 17.*
&c. where having laid down this poſition. *v. 16.*
 as the reſult of his argument, from the inſtance
 of *Jacob* and *Eſau*, viz. *That Election is not of*
him that willeth, or of him that runneth; but of
God that ſheweth mercy: wherein is implied, *a*
pari, that non-election alſo is not of him that
 willeth or runneth well or ill; but from the
 ſovereign pleaſure of God: this latter part he
 proveth by the inſtance of *Pharaoh*, that his non-
 election or reprobation was not of himſelf; but of
 the ſovereign will of God, becauſe the Scripture
 teſtifie, that God raiſed him up, (made him, pre-
 pared him, as others render *Exod. 9. 16.*) on pur-
 poſe to ſhew all his wonders upon him, and to
 glorifie his power in his juſt deſtruction: God
 did not therefore barely ſuffer *Pharaoh* to har-
 den his heart, but he did intend to harden him,
 and from thence to take occaſion to manifeſt his
 Power and Juſtice; therefore the Apoſtle inſerts
 from this inſtance *v. 18.* that *God ſheweth mercy*
on whom he will, in deſigning and preparing them
 for mercy, and *whom he will, he hardneth*, thought
 not with the ſame manner of efficacy: that he
 ſoftneth thoſe whom he ſaveth, yet not without
 an efficacious Decree and Influence; elſe why is
 the act of hardening aſcribed to him? or what
 ground

ground were there for the objection ensuing, v. 19. *Why doth he find fault? Who hath resisted his will?* if God had no will at all, or active influence upon the sins of men, but only suffered them to act, or not to act, and perhaps foreknew what way they would take. The Answer to the Objection is yet clearer, v. 20. *Nay but, O Man! who art thou that answerest again to God?* which is forbidden to Servants towards their Masters Titus 2. 9. *Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?* Here the matter is clearly resolved into the will, the active forming will of God, which is confirmed by the similitude of the Potters disposing of the Clay, according to his pleasure, *for honorable or dishonorable employments*, v. 21. Now the Potter doth make a positive discretion or difference betwixt several parcels out of the same mass for several uses; one parcel he intendeth for honorable, and the other for dishonorable uses; and then he formeth and fitteth them to his own purpose; he doth not make up some, and lay others upon the Wheel, waiting to see which way they will determine themselves, whether for better or worser sort of Vessels, and then strike in with them according to their own determination: and thus also the Apostle calls them *Vessels fitted, made up, or fashioned for destruction*, κατηρτισμένα. I know God acteth not upon the wills of the ungodly in the same manner as the Potter doth on the Clay; but if he had no ordinative or determining influence upon them in their sinful motions, then were there no similitude at all, betwixt Gods acting

acting upon men, and the Potters upon the Clay, and their disposing of both: nor had it been at all pertinent, for the Apostle to have alledged the incomprehensible sovereignty of God to solve the objection, when he might readily have said, God hardeneth no man, but only leaveth him to dispose of himself either to hardning or softning as he pleaseth: if it be said, the Apostle speaketh here of the Decree, not of the act of hardning; I answer, If God decree to harden a man, it followeth, that he doth actually do it in time, and in the instance of *Pharaoh* the Argument is from the execution to the Decree; God did harden *Pharaoh's* heart, and the ground of it was; because he intended him and raised him up on purpose to magnifie his power and severity on him: therefore God did more then onely suffer *Pharaoh* to harden his own heart.

2. Concerning *Absolon's* Incest God saith, *2 Sam.* 12. 11, 12. *I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house; I will take away thy Wives; I will give them to thy Neighbour, he shall lye with them; I will do this before all Israel, and before the Sun.* Here I observe the event *Absolons* Incest certainly foretold and threatned, as that which should infallibly come to pass,; and that not out of a speculative prescience, God barely foreseeing it would be; but out of a practical and firme purpose, that it should come to pass for punishment to *David*, and also that God doth three times ascribe it to himself, as that he would bring to pass, and all to humble *David* the more: how small a thing

*Vid. Dav-
venant
Animad.
p. 1812.*

would it have been, if he had said, thy Son will defile thy Wives, I foreknow it, and I will permit him to do it, *i. e.* I will not hinder him: seeing for all this it had been in *Absolon's* power to have committed the sin, or to have forbore as he pleased; where then would have been the certainty of that event; or the penalty of it to *David*? or why doth God in so many expresse words, take it upon himself, when he meant no more then not to prevent it by his almighty power? whereas it was still indifferent in the respect of his purpose and in respect of *Absolon*, the immediate cause, whether it should have been, or not have been: for by this Doctrine, as men sin without any determining influence upon their wills, or actions, so they avoid sin (as oft as it is avoided without any effectuall grace) by their own self motion and determination, without any influence from God inclining them that way: and thus *Absolons* sin must have been meerly indifferent and uncertain, notwithstanding the prediction and threatning, if God had no influence upon the natural actions, which were the subjects of his sin. Like to this is that *1 Kings 22. 22, 23.* where God commandeth the *lying Spirit* to goe forth into *Ahab's* Prophets to perswade him to go up to *Ramoth-Gilead*; and promiseth that he should perswade him and prevail, and it is added, *that the Lord had put a lying Spirit into the mouth of all his Prophets.* Now to pass by what is Dramatick in this Story, and so not fit for argument: it is manifest that God did purpose that the *lying Spirit* should inspire *Ahabs* Prophets, and not only permit him

to do it if he would when he might also have forbore, if he had pleased: likewise that God resolved and foretold *Micaiah*, that this lying Spirit should persuade and prevail with *Ahab*, that *Ahab* should go up to Battel, and should fall there by the unjust hand of the *Syrians*. Whence could these indifferent and free effects have any certainty of future election, unless God had a determining influence upon them? for as to second causes they were all indifferent and uncertain: will they say, God only permitted them, and foresaw them: that he meant not that the Spirit should prevail; as if he would make it prevalent, but that he foresaw it would prevail? let us remember that prescience and bare permission have no causality, nor make any thing certainly future; but this seduction and fall of *Ahab*, are not only foretold, but penally threatned, as things determined to come to pass; therefore there was a causal influence upon these acts, and not a bare prescience and permission of them. Parallel also, is the *2 Thes. 2. 11, 12. God shall send them strong delusions, that they may believe a lye, that they all may be damned who believe not the truth, &c.* This also is penal and certainly appointed and threatned, not barely foreknown; the meritorious cause was, *That men received not the love of the Truth, [believed it not] but had pleasure in unrighteousness*: The means whereby these errors were wrought, were the unrighteous deceits of Antichrist, with all deceivableness in them, &c. v. 9. the end, *that they might be damned, for their self-deceiving and opposing the truth*: but
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what

what made these errors take with men? why could they not escape them, at least the most gross and damning of them? surely if in these things they were so free that they might act or not act, they might escape: but the reason why they cannot is, *God shall or will send them* [*Μετ.*] *Ἰεὺ αἰτοῖς ὁ θεὸς ἐνέργειαν πλάνης*] *efficacious error*; therefore God in his righteous judgment makes it effectual, and prevalent, by influencing the acts of their understandings, & will, and leaving them to the obliquity.

3. *Acts 4. 27, 28.* The Jews and their Rulers in killing Christ did, *Whatsoever the hand and the counsel of God determined should be done*: I will not lay much stress upon the distinction of the words *hand* and *counsel*: But I thus argue: *All that the Jews did in killing our Lord were wicked actions, and yet all predetermined and appointed by the Decree of God*; but whatsoever God decreeth shall be done, he doth in some manner bring to pass by his power, and influence; therefore God had a powerful influence upon these wicked actions of the Jews. To this the Author answereth: *That God foreknowing that the Jews would murder Christ, did determine the circumstances, and how far they should go.* But did not God decree and appoint the death of Christ, and in what manner, and in what place, and by whom he should be slain? did he not promise it to the Church of old, that *by his stripes they should be healed, and that upon him, should be laid all our iniquities*? did God foresee the Jews would kill him, and then order that the ends and effects of his death should be salvation

to his Elect? did not God send him into the World on purpose to dye? he was delivered, Acts 2. 23. *ἐνδεδοτο* given up by the determinate counsel of God, before the Jews could kill him: If God did not determine the death of Christ, then was it uncertain, and he might, or might not have been slain, for any thing the Providence of God did to bring it about; and then the whole Work of Redemption was uncertain also; for that depended on Christs death, and his death depended wholly upon the undetremined fickle will of Man. Moreover, If God determined how far the Jews should proceed, (as is granted) I ask, Is this meant *positively*, or *negatively*? if *positively*, that they should do such things to him *v.g.* *scourge him, blaspheme him, crown him with thorns, Crucifie him, &c.* then he determined sinful actions should be done, and so must influence the doing of them: If *negatively*, that God foreseeing all the Jews would do, only determined that they should goe no farther, *e.g.* *not brake his bones, not keep him in the grave, &c.* then it would follow, that God restrained and withheld them from doing, and willing these things; even such as were in their power to do if they pleased; and then there is a predetermination of the will, even without grace. You will say, *This determination was to hinder sin, not to sinful actions*: True, but if no determining influence were needful to those actions, whereby all the promises and prophecies were fulfilled in his death and circumstances thereof, what needeth a predetermination to restrain the Jews from doing more then was foretold? might not their will have been trusted in the one as well as

in the other? or did God foreknow, that they would have done more, if he did not determine to prevent them? then there are futurities, which God never decreed; or God foreknoweth what never shall be. Other Scriptures I pass by for brevity sake; only remarking that the harsher terms, which are used to express Gods Providences about sin by some Divines, and so tragically exagitated by others, are for the most part taken out of Scripture: and therefore it would become a Divine, that excepts against the Doctrine and the expressions, first, solidly to answer the Scripture from whence they are taken. Give me leave to add one Argument or two.

1. *If God certainly foreknows all the sinful actions of Men, (as is granted by our Author) then these sinful actions were certainly future; else Gods foreknowledge were not infallible: If they were certainly future; whence had they that certain futurition? not from divine prescience, that supposeth them future, but doth not make them so; nor from second causes, they were future before these had a Being; and when they do exist, they are free, and there is no certainty whether they will act good or evil: and in particular actions there is no certainty whether they will act or not: There is therefore nothing that maketh sinful actions future, and so the object of prescience, but that which giveth futurition to all things; the Decree or Purpose of God, that those actions should be, and that he will permit the creature to act them inordinately; And if God*
 Decree

Decree that sinful actions shall be, then his power and influence doth concur to the causality of them: as physical actions; for what God decreeth shall be, he decrees by his own Providence to bring to pass. The Author by way of prevention to this Argument saith, *That the manner how God foreknows things is unsearchable, and and not at all necessary for us to know*: and is it necessary that we should know the manner how God predetermineth the will to all its actions? or do we indeed know the manner of any of Gods acts, either immanent or transient? and yet Scripture and Reason may shew us that there are such actions: Scripture tells us God foreknoweth all things; and Reason tells us, that cannot be foreknown, or known to be future, (which is all one) which is not future: nor can any thing be future; but what God determineth shall be, because *all things are of him, Rom. 11. 36.* therefore there is a Decree and a providential Influence about sinful actions. Nor will the Jesuits *scientia media*, avoid this argument, viz. *That God doth not foreknow contingent things, either as future absolutely, or as meerly possible: but he knoweth them conditionally future, i. e. supposing such and such circumstances, he knoweth what will follow e.g. God did not know that Adam would Fall as a certain future event, nor did he look upon it only as possible, that he might fall; but he knew if the Serpent tempted, and his Wife persuaded in that manner, and with those circumstances which afterwards came to pass, that then he would yield: If this were true, then he hath no certain foreknowledge of contingent things,*

but only a probable conjecture at events: then how was *Cyrus* his Name and Victories; *Alexander's* Success; and all the circumstances of our Saviours Birth and Death so punctually foretold? but further, Is it indeed certain, that men will act in some certain manner, if such circumstances do concur; that *Adam* would fall in those circumstances, which afterwards surrounded him: how then is the will indifferent to act, or not to act in the moment immediately before it acteth, notwithstanding all motives and circumstances, which they contend to be essential to it? and if it be not certain that *Adam* would fall in those circumstances; then it was only certain that he might fall if he would, and God did not prevent; and so his fall was but a meer possibility. Once more, I would fain know, how God did foresee the various circumstances of the second causes; if as future, then he determined that such circumstances should befall the creatures, and then knew, what they would do in those circumstances, which is all one as if he had determined what they should do: as if God foresaw *Adam* would fall, if he were so tempted, if he did not hinder him; and he did purpose to suffer him to be tempted, and not to prevent his fall; because he had purposed to permit it. But if God foreknow the contingent circumstances of second causes in a middle way, *i.e.* what these circumstances will be, supposing other circumstances, then the question will return in *infinitum*: it remains then, that he must know them only as possible, *viz.* that God knew *Adam* might be tempted, and that if he were tempted,

ted, that he might fall: by the same reason, God knew only, that the Devil might tempt him; and that the Angels might fall, and become tempters; or that man might be tempted some other way; or sin without temptation, and so God foreknows no contingent things, but only knoweth them to be possible, *i. e.* that they may be if he please; and so this overthrows instead of salving Divine prescience. Nor doth the new device, which our Author seemeth to favour, *viz. the divisibility of Gods eternity*, succeed better: for if God know all things, only because he is successively coexistent with them, and so beholds them as they are; then he did not foreknow them from all eternity, or before they did exist, nor in one eternal simple act, but by many successive acts; this may be called knowledge and intuition if they please, but it is not foreknowledge.

2. If God do not determine mens wills in evil actions, as to the acts themselves, this would greatly weaken our submission to God, and our forgiving of men, when evil befalls us; for we cannot say, that men are Gods instruments: that God took away *Jobs* Cattel; but the *Chaldeans*, for they might either have done it, or forborn, for any influene God had on them; nor could God hinder them without a miracle; so that it was wholly they, not God that did it: nor can we say, God for holy ends hath purposed and suffered these things to come to pass; for if God hath no influence upon the will in acting them, he did never purpose them or design them to his

own wise ends; but foresaw that creatures would do them, and resolved to let them alone, and at the most, resolved only to put some bounds and limits to them. If God do not influence the wills of men, we are much more at their disposal, yea at the disposal of the Devil, then we would willingly be.

3. *God raiseth up the Wicked to punish the sins of his people*; as the *Assyrians Isa. 10.* The *Caldeans Habak. 1. 12.* and many others: and this is expressed by calling for them, appointing, anointing for this work, ordaining and establishing them for judgment and correction, *Job 1. 12.* stirring up their spirits, raising them up to be enemies, &c. wherefore God calls them his servants, because they do the work he hath appointed them; though they thought not so; but were for the most part Invaders, Usurpers, and the Disturbers of the World: If God did not determine their wills, then they were indifferent to do, or not to do, these things, for all the appointment and providence of God: besides punishment, and correction, are judicial acts, such as God might justly execute, yea must, in the ordinary course of his government of the World; it is not therefore unbecoming him to appoint his executioners, who shall fulfil his will, and to cause them to do it, though they mix their own sins and passions in doing it; or think not of any thing less, then pleasing God in what they do. If God only foresee what the wicked will do, and permit them to do it against his people, then he doth not appoint these
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afflictions for sin, but only permit them ; nor is it certain, that ever those judgments will come, because it is in the power of the instruments to be, or not to be, the Authors of such calamities. Thus much for the proof of the Question.

S E C T IV.

WE must now consider what the Author objecteth against predetermination to sinful actions.

He saith, *These sentiments must (he conceives) to any impartial understanding, leave it no way sufficiently explicable, how the influence and concurrence the holy God hath to the worst of actions, is to be distinguished from that which he affords to the best.*

Answer, A Critical Reader might be very apt by this passage to suspect, that what is said concerning the necessity of efficacious grace to all good actions in this state of trial, meaneth no more, then that God doth irresistably determine the will to good actions ; and that by those actions, gracious habits are wrought ; and that both the habits and their exercises are maintained and perfected by a natural determining influence of God, without any supernatural preventing or co-operating grace ; else, surely the difference of Gods influence to gracious actions, from

from that he gives to evil actions is very great and manifest: to the former he doth supernaturally infuse gracious principles, which he also preserveth against all opposition, and exciteth to action, and assisteth them in it: and whatsoever good is done, he is the efficient of it, even to the least degree, and all in pursuance of his eternal purpose, whereby he had decreed to glorifie himself, by the salvation of such persons, and appointed these gracious habits and acts, amongst others, to be proper means of obtaining this end: but on the contrary, to evil actions he giveth no principles, no special assistance or excitation; he is not the efficient of the evil in any sort, nor did he purpose or ordain them, as proper means to bring about any end of his, though he did purpose to permit them, and to overrule them to his own glory. When God doth determine to evil actions, he doth but afford that general influence, which is necessary to all creatures according to their natures; which is to excite and incline them to act, according to those natural principles that are in them, and having assisted them to their natural actions, he doth according to his sovereign pleasure, leave them to their own weakness, whence ariseth the defect and sinfulness of their actions. The determination to good actions is supernatural; to evil ones, but common, and natural providence: in the former it is to the act, and to the goodness of the act, in the latter, to the act, but not to the evil of it.

2. The Author goes on: *Wherein such inherently evil actions are less to be imputed to him who forbid's them, than to the malicious tempter, who prompts to them, or the actor that does them, or wherein not a great deal more.*

Answ. Sin is to be imputed to the actors, because out of their own evil nature, by their own choice, they voluntarily do evil for the satisfaction of their own inordinate affections: and to the tempter, because he persuades them to do evil, in order to that evil end, out of malice both to God and Man: but nothing of all this can be charged upon God, the evil of actions is not from him, but from the creature, nor doth he intend the satisfaction of their lusts; but immediately the continuance of the course of nature, in helping his creatures in their natural actions; and ultimately to order all to his own moral and most holy ends: besides, God useth all wise and fit moral means to prevent mens sinning, which neither they nor the tempter do care to use: Nor yet doth God so determine mens wills, but that they also determine themselves to every action, and act according to their own principles and motives, and according to the last resolutions of their own reason; so that God doth only influence them, as the first universal cause and author of all motion, but not exempting by the second causes from being authors of their own actions also: as Gods concurring to every act of man, doth not hinder him from being the proper total cause of his own act, so Gods predetermining mans will to act, doth not hinder, but that he doth freely predetermine himself also; therefore

man

man only predetermineth himself to, and doth the evil; God predetermineth only to the natural action, and permitteth the evil, not for evils sake, or to gratifie the lusts of the creature; but for high and holy ends of his own glory; nor is he more culpable for not preventing the evil that may cleave to those actions to which he determineth the creatures in his common providence, then he is for denying to them any other degree of restoring grace, nor sanctifying grace it self. Let us follow the Author.

3. *And leave it undeniable, that the matter of all his laws, in reference to all such actions that ever have been done in the World, be a simple and most strictly natural impossibility; nothing being more apparently so, than either not to do an action whereto the agent is determined by an infinite power; or to separate the malignity thereof, from an intrinsecal evil action.*

Ans. By this cryptick Retorick, (I think) he means, that if God determine men to sinful actions, then he doth by his laws forbid those things which are simply, and most strictly naturally impossible to be avoided: and *e. contra* in requiring obedience of those whom he will determine to evil actions, he requireth that which is naturally impossible to be done: but this proposition is a simple and absolute falsehood: a natural impossibility is that which is impossible in nature, which can by no means be; and this is either intrinsecally, when there is an inconsistency betwixt the two extreames in their own nature; or extrinsecally in respect of the efficient causes, thus,

thus, that is impossible which hath no cause to produce it, now when God determineth the will to sinful actions, and yet forbids them; which way is the avoiding of them impossible? not the first; for there is no contradiction in nature, but man might have done otherwise, nor any difficulty, if God had pleased to afford him his grace: not the latter; for mans own will as it doth freely determine it self to evil, so it might freely forbear in particular acts; or freely determine it self to good below spiritual; therefore here is a cause which might, if it would, have acted otherwise; and so the forbearing of evil, and doing of good, the matter of Gods Laws are no impossibility in nature: God commands and forbids nothing, but what may be done or avoided in it self: and what man hath a natural power to do or avoid; and which ever he taketh, he doth voluntarily choose it according to his own present reason and apprehension of things: but man is determined by an infinite power; and therefore it is naturally impossible for him to do otherwise: true, *in sensu composito*, supposing he is determined to act, and doth act accordingly, then it is impossible he should act otherwise, whether he be determined by an infinite or only a finite power; but in *sensu diviso*, it is false and without all shadow of reason, that what God determineth man now to do, he could not have determined him otherwise, or man could not have done otherwise, abstracting from that determination. The ground of this mistake is, that it supposeth predetermination to be impelling, forcing, necessitating the will of man, which

which it is not : man willeth as freely and deliberately as if he were not predetermined, and he can act otherwise, if he please; as we see men are often deterred from their evil purposes, by fear of God or man, or some other reasons; onely, which ever way mans will chooseth, God, that is as near to it as it self, doth determine it, when it determineth it self; so that the will doth both act and determine it self, as to its own sense, absolutely and according to its own motives, yet being Gods creature it doth it dependently upon him, and subordinately to him: this propolition therefore is false: man cannot will otherwise, because he is determined by an infinite power; for the immediate cause why he willeth is, because he will, and he is indifferent to will otherwise, or not to will according as his motives shall be, only being absolutely dependent on God, he cannot determine himself any way, but God determineth him also.

Obj. But evil is inseperable from the act; therefore if God determine to the act, he must determine to the evil also.

Ans. There is no act but moral evil is sepe-
rable from it, it is morally evil only because it is forbidden, and if there had been no law, there had been no transgression in men more then in Brutes: if there were actions intrinsically evil, there must be also causes intrinsically evil to produce them, and seeing nothing can make or change its own nature, and so make it self intrinsically evil, it followeth those evil causes
must

must be made by God, and so he will be undeniable the author of evil: yet I confess, supposing the Law to be made, there are some acts whose evil cannot be separated from them, viz. those that are evil from their tendency to a forbidden ject, as the hatred of God, &c. and these seem to be here intended: yet to those actions man doth most freely determine himself, and notwithstanding divine predetermination, he doth use the same reason, motives, liberty, and indifferency as can be desired by those that deny predetermination, only he is subject to the ordination and influence of God in all, and why God may not, yea must not in the course of natural providence determine his creatures in these, as well as in other actions from which evil is more separable; and why he must be the author of evil by influencing the will to act, more then by concurring immediately to the act it self, this Author is concern'd to shew: for he granteth, that God doth immediately concur to every act of the creature; then he concurrerth to the hatred of himself; now if he can concur to the substance, and not to the evil of the act, then may he determine the will to the act, and not to the obliquity: if the unseparableness of the evil from the act, make it unfit that God should determine the will to it, why doth it not make it unfit he should concur to it?

Postscript
Pag. 28. 29

The same answer will serve to what is further objected, that God cannot justly punish an action to which himself doth determine the agent; that this doth not consist with his goodness and righteousness: for

Pag. 37. 38
39, 40, 41.

*Vid. Dav.
ve. Ani-
mad. ad
P. 195.*

for his goodness and righteousness do not hinder him from concurring immediately and effectually to the worst of actions, which could never be, unless he did concur to them; nor do they hinder him from punishing them: if then here be no repugnance to the blessed Nature of God; neither is there any in his determining the will to those actions: nor doth this subvert the foundations of all Moral Government, Humane, and Divine: for the foundation of Laws and Government is not, that creatures should act independently on God, in any respect, or be absolute masters of their own actions; but that they have power to suspend their actions till reason tells them they should act, and freedom to act this or that way, or to forbear acting as rational motives shall persuade them: all this they will enjoy notwithstanding they are subject to the influence and government of the first cause, who governs them according to their natures, and doth no more impel, force, or necessitate them in their free actions, than his predetermination, acknowledged at least sometimes, in the natural agents doth make them *meer Machines*, acting without an internal principal. Nor yet doth God predetermine the will of man after the manner of surprisals and impulses, as is suggested: for these impulses upon mans will are a sensible [impression of Divine power, strongly carrying the mind along with them, whereby the free exercise of deliberation is for the present suspended; and man is carried to act with a kind of pleasant force, not against nature or reason, but something *prater naturam*, out of the natural

*P. 141. &
Postsc. 40.
41.*

natural course, and therefore it is not fit such impulses should be common in the government of rational creatures; but predetermination imposeth no such force upon the mind, is not sensible, hindreth not the free and full exercise of deliberation; but guideth and determineth the creature that way, which it determineth it self; so that whatever it doth, is not done *sine Numine*.

3. He appealeth to the sence of a tender spirit; *after being closely urged with the thought, that God should irresistibly determine the will of man to the hatred of himself, and then to punish it, what relief it would be now to it, to be taught to reply [that man is under the Law, and God above it &c.] what! that God should make a Law, and necessitate the violation of it; and yet also punish that violation! and this be thought a sufficient salvo, that himself is not subject to any Law! will he be any whit eased by the thin sophistry of an ambiguity in the word Law? which sometimes signifies the declared pleasure of a Ruler to a Subject, in which sence God can be under no law having no Superiour: but not seldome also, an habitual fixed principle, and rule of acting after one steady tenour: in which sence the perfect rectitude of Gods own holy gracious nature is an eternal law to him, &c.* Pag. 40 41

Ans. 1. We deny that predetermination doth necessitate man to sin: he acteth freely, yet not without divine manuduction and ordination, as he liveth by the ordinary means of life; yet not without divine manutenency.

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2. The ambiguity in the word *Law* is of his own making: the Authors that use that defence for predetermination, viz. *that Man is under the Law, and God above it*, mean it only of the Revealed Law of God, which is the rule of mans acting, and Gods judicial proceedings with man; but is not the rule of Gods secret purposes what man shall do, or of his secret actions in man: God will act according to the Prerogative of an Infinite Creator, and according to the natural dependence of the Creature on him, and subjection to him, notwithstanding any law he shall please to give Man, for the rule of his Obedience.

3. Nor do the Defenders of Predetermination deny, that the perfect rectitude of Gods Nature is an Eternal Immutahle Law to him; but rather assert that, this is the only rule he acteth by: but how doth it appear, that this rectitude of his nature, doth oblige him not to influence and determine his creatures to all, and amongst others to sinful actions? Must we measure the Essential Law of his Nature, by the Law he hath prescribed to Man? or can creatures conceive, what the rectitude of Gods infinite and absolute will doth oblige him to, further then he hath obliged himself by his declarations? God hath shewed infinite Wisdom in creating the World, and Infinite Goodness in redeeming Fallen Man; but did his Nature oblige him to either? or to that manner of proceeding which he took in either? would he have been unwise, had he not made the World, or not so as he did?

or

*Daven.
Animad.
p.278.v.9.
&c.290,
291.*

or would he not have been Infinitely Good, had he not redeemed Sinners, or not by Christ? In like manner, his Laws shew the Infinite Holiness and righteousness of God; but would he have been unholy, had any of his Commands been other then they be? what is our holiness or righteousness, but conformity to Gods will? and how is his will holy and righteous, but in that it is agreeable always to it self? who then can tell what the rectitude of Gods blessed Nature obligeth him to; but God himself?

4. Nor will the pious and tender Soul, wounded with too curious thoughts and inquiries into the sovereignty and uncontrollableness of Gods actions, be any whit eased or relieved, by being told; that God indeed doth not determine them to any act ordinarily, much less those that are evil: but he eternally foresees all the evil that they would commit in every degree and circumstance; and though he could have hindred it, yet he resolved he would not, but would suffer them to take their course, and then resolved to damn them for it: nor this only, but he resolved not so much as to hinder the Tempter or wicked men from enticing, and sometimes even impelling them to sin, and carrying them headlong to destruction; nor to prevent the motives to it, nor the opportunities and occasions of committing it: he knew what strivings of Conscience there would be many times against sin; that one reason more suggested, one friend seasonably coming in, might have overcome the temptation and prevented the sin, and yet he

would not afford this help, when he could have done all this without any injury to his Justice, or to the nature of his Créatures; and when as much or more seems to be promised by his word. Sure I am, nothing will quiet a troubled soul, that hath scorched it self, by flying too high, and too near the Beames of Infinite Majesty: but the consideration of his absolute sovereignty, and infinite perfection, which silenced *Job*, when God brought it to his mind, *Chap. 40.* Nor will any thing ease the troubled thoughts, but this, that whatever God may do in his Infinite Sovereignty, yet he will proceed with men according to his Laws and Promises, and not otherways: *secret things belong to the Lord, but the things that are revealed belong to us, that we may do all the things of his Law. Deut. 29. 29.*

It is not, as is pretended, the Name of any Man, which so much recommendeth this Doctrine; but the Holy Scripture: Nor is there any reason, why the contrary, which denyeth Gods predetermining influence to all actions, condemned by the Church, in the *Jesuits* and *Arminius*, should not be the more suspected for their sakes. The bare state of this Question commeth but to this: *Whether it doth consist with as much liberty as reasonable Creatures are capable of, and is fit for them, to be influenced and determined by God in all their actions?* If it doth, (which our Divines affirm) then God is as much cleared from all suspicions, and harsh imputations this way, as he can be, admitting only Infallible Pre-science, and that he could prevent sin if he would

would, without intrenching on the creatures liberty: if it doth not consist with liberty, this should be proved, which hath not yet been attempted, without making odious conclusions and tragical declamations to terrifie the weak, and to furnish the Prophane with Scoffs, against the unsearchable Methods of Providence, *Bishop Davenants* Judgment shall close this Quest. *Animad. Pag. 73.* *If any man shall go about to set Mans Will at liberty, and to tie up short the decreeing and determining Will of God, as if this had not the determining stroke amongst all possible evil actions or events which shall infallibly be, and shall infallibly not be: he may avoid the suspicion of Stoicisme or Manicheisme, but he will hardly avoid the suspicion of Atheism: for the greater number of mens actions being wicked and evil; if these come into act without Gods determinate Counsel, and Decree: Humane affairs are more overruled by Mans Will, then by Gods.*

S E C T. V.

QUESTION 2. *Whether it can be defended, that God doth efficaciously concur to all good actions, and not at all to evil actions? and whether the former be not as inconsistent with liberty, as if he should concur to the latter?*

The Author having delivered so much of the Doctrine of *Arminius*, against Predetermination, *Vid. Twiss* which he largely prosecutes against *Mr. Perkins*, *ut supra* and which (as the Doctor observes) he borrowed from *Molina* and *Bellarmino*, yet he is very so-

¶ 43. 44.

Postsc. P.
39. 61.

licitous not to be accounted an *Arminian*; and therefore layeth down this position, in different Characters. In this temporary state of trial, the efficacious grace of God is necessary to actions sincerely good and holy; which therefore all ought undespairingly to seek and pray for. But that in reference to other actions, he doth only supply men with such a power, as whereby they are enabled either to act, or in many instances (and especially when they attempt any thing that is evil) to suspend their own actions. This he further explaineth thus, That Gods Influence is in reference to holy and spiritual actions (whereto since the Apostacy, the Nature of Man, is become viciously dis-inclined) necessary to be efficaciously determinative; such as shall overcome that disinclination, and reduce those powers into act.

It seemeth by his restraining the necessity of efficacious grace so cautiously to the apostate and vitious estate of man, and his state of trial, that if grace were perfect, and no dis-inclination to spiritual things, were remaining in man, then there were no more need of efficacious assistance; but such a general influence, as he alloweth to all other actions, might suffice to gracious acts also, viz. such as leaveth them indifferent to act, or not to act: and so the Elect Angels, and Saints in Heaven are not secured from Apostacy, nor sure to continue in their blessedness, any more then Adam was secured in the estate of Innocency: and thus we have another peece of *Arminianisme*, if not a strain beyond it: But we will take what he granteth, sc. that God by an
efficacious

efficacious influence determineth man to all actions sincerely good; and thence inquire,

1. *Whether it doth not hence follow, that God doth predetermine to actions, that have evil annexed to them? And I thus prove it doth. There is no action good and holy in this state of trial, but hath much evil annexed to it; therefore if God determine to good actions, he doth determine also to them that have sin annexed to them. There is a double evil adhering to good actions, the one, that the goodness that is in them is not so intense and strong as it should be; the other, that evil principles and ends have influence in part upon those actions, and so they are not done purely from Obedience to God, and for his Glory: e.g. He that giveth Almes piously, and sincerely, he faileth nevertheless, in that he giveth not so much, so seasonably, so readily and heartily, as he should; or in like circumstances: and also that he giveth partly from desire of vain glory, and for some big respects and interest, not purely from love to God and his Neighbour: now when God determineth him to this good act of Almes-giving, doth he not determine him to an act, to which sin cleaveth, which is the substrate matter of sin, as well as of goodness; and many times of more sin, then goodness? the act is the same; one simple act of Almes-giving: and he that determineth to the good act, must determine to the evil act also: may God determine to the good act, and not to the evil of it? why may he not do so likewise in all natural actions? doth the evil proceed from Mans own will, and*

from the want of grace, so efficacious as to prevent it? why may not the same be admitted in other actions?

Lastly, Doth not God require the perfection of holy actions, (though not upon pain of death under the New Covenant) and is not the defect of them a sin? are not all moral means used, commands, exhortations, counsels, intreaties, prohibitions, examples, &c. and that goodness might be perfect both in habit and act, and the sinful mixtures prevented? if then it doth consist with Gods Moral Government, and perfect holiness to determine men to those actions to which he knoweth sin will certainly cleave, and yet he resolveth not to give grace enough to prevent it: why may it not be as consistent with both, that he should determine men to all their natural actions: though he withal resolveth, that his influx shall not extend to the preventing of all evil, which may cleave to these actions? sure this must be granted, unless he will say, that sin doth not necessarily cleave to good actions, though God afford but partial grace and assistance; and that men may stir up themselves and perform those acts without any mixture of evil, though efficacious grace doth not extend so far; and then efficacious grace will not be absolutely necessary to every good act, at least to every degree and circumstance of it, but some will be in the power of mans own will.

Post. P. 20.

33.

To this he answereth Rhetorically, *That it doth not follow, God determineth to actions imperfectly good; therefore to them that are altogether*
evil

evil: if to those that are good in substance, then also to those that are in substance evil.

Ans. It doth not directly follow, nor is it intended it should, but this doth follow; if God determine to actions imperfectly good, and partly evil, then he doth determine to evil actions, and the evil cleaving to actions doth not hinder but God may determine to those very acts: and then the principle Question will return; *How God can forbid all evil in actions sincerely, and yet intend so to determine to gracious actions, as to suffer much evil to cleave to them; and yet be angry with it, and punish for it?* What is further said of an act, in substance evil, is denied both by us, and himself also afterward, *Pag. 36.* where he granteth, that no action is so evil, but there is some natural good, which is the substrate matter of that evil: therefore the substance, and the evil in all actions are diverse, and God may determine to the one, and not to the other.

2. Enquire, Whether the same reasons which are brought against predetermining influence to all other actions, particularly those that are sinful, (for the Author denyeth it in all) will not effectually disprove efficacious grace to good actions? and that they will, shall appear by these three reasons.

Reason I. It is altogether as inconsistent with humane liberty: for in the working of grace, there is a supernatural quality infused, wherein mans heart is obedientially passive, and so not capable either of
resisting

resisting or consenting. There is also a special preserving influence to maintain this grace against opposite corruptions and temptations, that are far stronger then it : and moreover, this grace infused is excited and acted by Divine power throughout a mans life ; and by the same power, the contrary evil habits and suggestions of Satan are often abated and quelled in an immediate and special manner. Now here is much more done, then in determining the creatures to their ordinary, natural and civil actions, where God infuseth no principle, nor concurrereth in an extraordinary manner, but only assisteth them according to their natures, and infallibly guideth them to those ends, which he hath wisely proposed to himself : if then predetermination infer a natural necessity in the creatures acting, and a most strictly natural impossibility of their acting otherways, or not acting, (as the Author saith) how must not efficacious grace infer a greater necessity, and a greater impossibility of the contrary, where infinite power is resolved to work, not according to, but above the nature of the creature, to produce his intended effects ? nor may it be said, this is to do them good, the other is to their hurt : cannot God do his creatures good without violating the nature and powers he had given them ? must he act contrary to their natural principles, and contrary to himself, that he may save them ? surely this would argue imperfection in the Infinite God : and if all this will consist with liberty (as we grant it doth) surely less then this, ordinary natural predeterminati-

on will, though it be in sinful actions: and so the creatures be only guilty.

Reason, II. *Efficacious Grace is as inconsistent with the rewards of grace, and the moral means of it.* If grace cannot be wrought without a supernatural irresistible influence of God; to what purpose are the precepts, promises, exhortations, prescribing of spiritual duties, as means of Regeneration, deterring from and threatening the contrary, if this regeneration cannot be wrought without an efficacious divine influence? man cannot be exhorted, and directed to do that, which is utterly above his Nature; nor is there need he should, when God had resolved to work it in him by his Omnipotent Power: and when grace is wrought, how is it capable of promises, and rewards, and means of increase, when every act, and every decree is carried on by infinite power; and the creature can do no otherways then he doth? or how are sinful defects punishable, when the Creature can prevent them no more then Infinite Power doth help it? If, all this will consist with the rewards of grace, the punishment of defects in the godly, and the moral means of working and perfecting grace and subduing corruption; why may not natural predetermination be as reconcileable with the punishment of sin, and the moral means to prevent it?

Reason, III. *If Efficacious Grace be necessary, only because of the sinful dis-inclinations of men to spiritual good, then not only the first working of*
grace

grace is miraculous, but every act of co-operating grace, every degree and act of inherent grace, are real Miracles, being not only supernatural to man in this estate of corruption; but also above the whole order and course of nature, there being no such thing ordinarily afforded to any creature, as effectual determining influence. It is true the progress and assistance of grace is supernatural, out of the reach of corrupt nature, and so far miraculous, but that it should be maintained and acted by the power of God, when it hath been once wrought in the heart, is common to it with all other created principles, saving that there is an assistance granted to it suitable to the continual opposition it is to meet with from the flesh: and thus every degree and act of grace is not an absolute Miracle; but it must be an absolute Miracle, if pre-determination be not usual to other creatures, in a common way of Providence: and so Miracles will be as frequent as ordinary Providences, though not so general in so many sorts of Creatures.

S E C T. VI.

QUESTION 3. *Whether there can be supposed a power afforded by God to the Creatures in order to their actions which is determinable by the Creatures, i. e. which they may use, or not use; and so act, or not act, as they please, notwithstanding that divine influence upon them? The Author saith, That in reference to other actions, (besides holy) God doth only supply men with such a power, as whereby*

whereby they are enabled to act, or in many instances (and especially when they attempt any thing that is evil) to suspend their own action. It seemeth then, that Gods influences upon mens wills in natural and civil actions are determinable by them, i. e. notwithstanding that influence, they may act or forbear e. g. Adam when tempted to eat the forbidden fruit, notwithstanding the influence of divine power upon him, was free and indifferent to eat, or not to eat: That this is impossible, I thus prove: That power God supplyeth Men with, and leaves them thus indifferent to act, or not to act, is either a faculty and principle of action; or a divine act upon the will of man: if it be a principle, then either it is the very will it self, or natural power of acting; and then it is trifling to say, God supplyeth men with a power, which they had ever since they had a Being; and this he denyeth: That this active providence of God about all the actions of men consists not meerly in giving them the natural power, whereby they can work of themselves, but in a real influence upon those powers: Or else it is the conservation of the will in its natural power of acting; and this cannot be for the former reason, and is also disallowed by him below: or his power must be a new principle given to the soul, every time it is to act; and then of what use are are natural powers? Besides, if there were a new principle afforded to every natural action, God should do more to natural actions, then he doth to those that are truly gracious: this power or influence then must be an act of God upon the will; and this act must be either antecedent to the

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Pag. 45.
Prop. 9.

the act of the will, or concomitant with it: if concomitant only, then it doth suppose the act of the will in nature before it, and doth assist it; and then it cannot leave the will indifferent to act, or not to act: that which doth already act, is not indifferent to act, or to forbear, and to that instant, and to that action: this power then must be an act of God upon the will, previous to the wills own act, which also is confessed, *That in reference to sinful actions; by this influence God doth not only sustain men who do them, and continue to them their natural faculties, and powers whereby they are done, but also as the first mover, so far excite and actuate those powers, as that they are apt and habile for any congenerous action, to which they have a natural designation; and where-to they are not sinfully dis-inclined.* And if it be a previous act upon the will, it is either finite, or infinite: if finite, the will indeed would not be determined by it, unless it pleased: but how should the infinite God be the immediate Author or Agent of a finite act? but if the act be infinite, it is impossible that it should leave the will indifferent to act, or not to act, which was to be proved. An infinite act must needs produce its effect to which it is designed; the design of this influence upon the will was (as becomes the first mover) to move it to act: it is therefore impossible, this influence being received, but the will must act, and so be determined by it. Moreover, suppose the will thus excited and moved should forbear acting, there would then be an act, and that an act of God, without any effect or terme produced by it, which is impossible:
for

for suppose, *Adam* moved by God to the natural act of eating the forbidden fruit, and yet being left indifferent to eat, or not to eat, had forborn eating: then God had moved his will, as the first mover, by an infinite act; and yet the will had not been moved, nor any thing wrought or acted in it, by that act, which were contradictions. But he saith, *This divine influence of God doth so far excite and actuate the will, as that it is apt and habile for any congenerous action, to which it hath a natural designation and is not sinfully disinclined*: This is almost as pleasant as the two-fold next power in the Provincial Letters, viz. next, and not next, to move and excite the power, to be apt and habile to act, according to its own nature, is somewhat more then hard to be understood. Material and Organical powers may be rendred habile for their actions, by well disposing and tempering the matter and Organs for operation; but this is not Concourse, nor done to every act; but sometimes when the creature hath been indisposed: nor is this the case of Mans will, that is made habile for acting by furnishing the mind with sufficient knowledge of the objects and motives which induce it to act, unless there be any contracted prejudice or averfness which is to be removed: but neither is this the special work of God, to furnish man with knowledge and motives, and to remove all averfness from acting, every time man is to act by his special and immediate Influence: natural powers are sufficiently habile for their natural actions, if the matter and organs be well disposed, the objects duly represented, and such other circumstances

stances as are necessary for their acting be rightly ordered and concurrent : what God doth to excite them by his immediate influence to make them habile for every act is not to be imagined. The will of man in natural and civil actions is in *potentia proxima*, sufficiently habile or ready to act, if man be informed of his object, and motives for acting or forbearing, and all natural circumstances do concur : if this be not enough, there must be some new quality supervening to the will to make it immediately fit to act in every natural action, which is to make void natural power. To resume the former instance, when *Adam* was persuaded by his Wife to eat the

Gen. 3. 6. *forbidden fruit*, as she had been by the Serpent before, and they both saw that it was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and much to be desired to make one wise : what did God now do, to make their wills apt and habile for action ? or what did their wills need to make them ready to act, when they were so informed concerning the object ? when they had considered the fruit and the motives to eat, and also knew the danger of eating, were they not in *proxima potentia*, immediately prepared to resolve one way or other ? what then could divine influence here do, unless determine them to the natural act, together with their own self determination ? I conclude therefore, that these are Rhetorical words without sense, so also are those that follow, *That if men do then employ them to the doing of any sinful action ; by that same influence, he doth, as to him seems meet, limit, moderate, and against the inclination and design of the sinful agent, overrule and dispose it to good.*

Answer,

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Ans. That God doth limit, moderate and overrule the natural powers and actions of the creatures, and turn their evil intentions to good effects, partly by powerful impulses upon them, and partly by intervening providences, which do disappoint and divert their Intentions, we readily grant: but that he should do all this by the self same influence, which exciteth and actuateth every natural power to every natural action, and yet this influence not determine them; but leave them indifferent to act, or not to act, he that can explain, *Erit mihi Magnus Apollo*, to limit, moderate, and over-rule, and yet to leave indifferent to act or not to act, are surely contradictions. Nor is it intelligible, how that same influence or act of God upon the will, which only makes it habile to act ordinarily should sometimes limit, and overrule it in its actings. He saith also, *prop. 8.*

Pag. 44. That Gods influence doth determine the Creatures in their natural actions, as oft as it seems to be wise and conducing to his holy ends: as if the special impulses, whereby the creatures are powerfully carried, were the natural predetermination in question: or as if God had not wise and holy ends in every act of the creatures, but only now and then, and that the greatest part of natural actions were not subject to the Decree and Ordination of God (which is the intent of this Opinion) but that God doth now and then interpose, this leads to a second Argument. If God hath appointed every act of the creatures to certain ends of his own, then his influence upon them doth not leave them indifferent to act, or not to

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act;

act, in any kind of action; but the former is true, therefore the latter. Can certainty depend upon uncertainty? a certain end, upon uncertain lubricous means? if God hath ordained a certain end of every action, then he will certainly attain that end: if he will certainly attain it, he must certainly conduct the creatures to it, else the natural mutability of free agents, and the innumerable casualtrys, that befall the natural and necessary agents, will often disappoint his intendment: nay if God do influence the creatures no further, then to make them fit to act, and then leave them either to act, or to forbear, as their free will or intervening accidents shall dispose, it is a sure sign, that in those actions, he doth not use them, as means to any end of his: but God doth design every act of the creatures to some end, *Rom. 11. 36. Through him, and to him are all things, Pro. 16. 4. God made all things for himself.* If God takes such notice of the Sparrows, that not one can fall to the ground, but he must give leave; and of all the Fowls of Heaven, as to provide and direct them to their daily food: if he also provide the gay cloaths for the Lillies of the Field, though they are so soon to be worn out; what concern or act of the creature shall we suppose of so small moment, which he doth not efficaciously direct and bring to his end? therefore divine influence doth not leave the creatures in their common actions free to act or not to act. I need add no more, till further occasion: the learned may see this largely and irrefrigably proved by *Dr. Twiss* in a digression on purpose.

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SECT 7.

S E C T VII.

QUESTION 4. *Whether Gods Prescience is more reconcileable with his laws and proceedings with men, then Predetermination is?* The Author hath seriously, and rationally demonstrated the agreement of Gods Moral Government of men with his infallible foreknowledge of all their actions, and what the success of all his Laws will be: but he is as confident, that this cannot be reconciled with his per determining influence, to their evil actions; and this he could not be content barely to declare (though the argument in hand obliged him to no more) but he thought fit also to declaim tragically against it, to make way for some further Novelties, which he hath conceived, and travelleth in pain till he is delivered of them. I shall therefore in prosecution of this Question, prove these two Propositions.

(1) *That the same objections and difficulties which ly against Predetermination, may, and are justly made against Prescience also, as to its reconcileableness with Gods proceedings.*

(2) *That whatever is said to reconcile Prescience with Gods proceedings, may also be said of Predetermination.*

For the first, *That the same difficulties attend Prescience and Predetermination*, besides what Schoolmen and Metaphysicians have said, is largely proved by learned Bishop Davenant: but before we prove it, let us remember what this Author granteth.

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1. That

*Ut supra p^a
419 &c*

1. That God hath an infallible and particular knowledge of all future actions and events of Men.

2. That to all their actions he giveth them his influence to excite and actuate their natural powers, to make them apt and habile to their natural actions, though in most of them, this influence leaveth them indifferent to act or not to act, as they shall please.

By the way, I question, whether it be sence to say, that an active power is actuated to be made only fit to act, and be left indifferent whether it will act or no : to actuate a thing is, to bring it out of meer possibility into act : a passive power is actuated by introducing an act, or form into it ; an active power is actuated by its own action, when of able to act, it doth act ; and so *potentia reducitur in actum* : how then God should actuate the will, and yet not cause it to act ; and excite it to lie still if that please I understand not.

3. He granteth, That God doth immediately concur with every act of the Creature.

4. That when men do that which is evil, his influence doth moderate, limit, and overrule them as he sees fit. Now let us see how this can be reconciled with Gods dealings with men, viz. with his wisdom and sincerity in his laws, and his Justice in executing those Laws : (for brevity sake I put them together) and,

First, 1 Object. That which God infallibly foreknows will, or will not be, is as strictly impossible to be otherways, as that to which he gives a determining influence ; it being as impossible his knowledge should be deceived, as that

that his power should be resisted : what wisdom is it then to forbid sin, which is impossible to be avoided ? and to command duty impossible to be done ? what though Prescience doth not make it impossible, yet God knowing that his laws would not be kept, before he made them ; he then made that law, which could not be kept, and which if it, were kept, he must be deceived, & so not be God

Nor doth God barely enact laws impossible to be kept ; but moreover, he doth second them with all arguments, motives, and means convenient to persuade their observation, as if he verily thought they would be kept : his Word, and Sacraments, innumerable Miracles, the Ordinances to press these, Providences to back them, the Authority of Superiours, the Examples of all, the Sufferings and Lives of Confessors and Martyrs, all are used to persuade men to that which is impossible they should be persuaded to : God knowing both in the general, and in every particular circumstance, what the unbelief and disobedience of men will be, and that they will not perform one act of duty, get one degree of grace, or omit one act or circumstance of sin more then what he eternally foreknew, even before the Laws, or men were made : what wisdom or sincerity is this ?

Secondly, *I Object*, The matter of Gods Law is not only foreknown that it will not, and so impossible to be kept, but God, also doth further the breaking of it, even in this Opinion : he knoweth that his Word, and the Means of Holiness will make some men worse ; and both

occasion, and provoke them to many sins, which else they would never have committed; and like a little water sprinkled on the fire, increaseth those lusts which they are not able to quench and subdue; he also affords them, life, strength, and all natural means, together with opportunities of sinning, and incentives to sin, such as he knows they will so use: he suffereth the Devil and wicked men importunately to tempt them: the intervening of a friend, one argument, one thought, one word or two more, might have hindered the commission of sin; this God knew, and yet, would neither withhold, nor hinder any thing, nor add one seasonable help more, which might have given the Victory; and yet seemeth as pathetically desirous of those mens Obedience and Salvation as of any others: Add to this; That God doth afford his influence to excite the will to act, when he knoweth it will sin; yea to those acts, which are most sinful and of no use in the course of nature, or to the universe; such as are the hatred, blasphemy of himself, &c. now however indifferent this influence leaveth men to act, or not to act, yet its impossible they should act without it.

1. Why else is it granted more then the efficacy of it? 2. Why then would God stir up the creatures to act; when he knew they would act to his own dishonour, and their hurt? why did he not rather leave them in their meer possibility, and let them miss their turns in acting; then excite and actuate them to their certain, foreseen destruction? how doth it consist with infinite Mercy and Compassion, to do all this, and also

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irrevocably to resolve to deny his preventing help, and grace, which he could easily give without any violence to his creatures nature, or wrong to his own?

Thirdly, *I object.* God maketh the matter of his own Laws a strictly natural impossibility, both by his concurrence, and by denying efficacious grace: by his concurrence thus God foreseeth that in such cases the creatures will act sinfully, yet he determineth neither to prevent the sin, nor to withhold his concurrence, without which neither the sin, nor the act can be prevented: and in those acts which are pleaded to be intrinsically and necessarily evil, as the hatred of God, &c. he doth the same, he foreknoweth that man will be guilty of such an act: he resolveth nevertheless not to prevent it; but to concur by his Infinite power to that act, as to any other: the forbearance then of that act of hating God, is impossible antecedently; because God hath determined to afford his concurrence to it; and concomitantly, when that act is put forth, God concurring to it, it is intrinsically impossible it should not be: without concurrence the Creature cannot act; else, what need is thereof concurrence? if God do concur, it is impossible but that act should be, wherefore God maketh it impossible, that such sinful acts should be forborn, how then can he either wisely, or sincerely forbid them, or justly punish them? moreover, efficacious grace is necessary, to actions sincerely good; this God immutably purposed from eternity, not to afford to some men,

and yet requireth Regeneration, and Holiness of them: he hath also purposed not to give perfect grace to any in this life, as seemeth to us, yet requireth perfect Holiness of his Servants, forbiddeth them every sin, correcteth often for sin, and yet will not afford effectual grace to prevent it; In all this God requireth a natural impossibility, and punisheth the defect of it, *viz, that which is beyond the natural power of the Creature in this corrupt estate, and which he is resolved not to remedy, or not effectually and perfectly by his supplying them with a supernatural power.* It is true, man made it impossible to himself to be truly holy; but God did both foreknow and permit it, and yet purpose to make, and accordingly did make a Law for his return, after he was thus disabled; and resolved not to help him, or not thoroughly by efficacious grace; therefore he requireth that which was naturally impossible to the Creatures, both in Gods foreknowledge, and also actually before the Law was made. These things might be amplyfied and as Rhetorically exaggerated, as they are against Predetermination: but I will not be an Orator for the Devil; and whatever answer can be truly made to them to defend Divine Prescience, may be as truly made in defence of Predetermination; which is the second Proposition; which before it be proved, let us remember that by Gods predetermining the Creatures to all their actions, we do not mean any kind of forceable impulse upon the Creatures, carrying them beyond or above much less, contrary to their natures; such impulses we grant in some cases, but they

they are not ordinary natural Predetermination, but something more: but God doth determine the Creatures by an insensible and connatural influence upon their faculties, exciting and carrying them to act, according to their several natures, in and with their own self determination; that, as when the creatures acteth, God concurreth with them, acting in their act, and with them; so when they excite themselves, and determine to act this, or that way, he also doth stir up their natural principles, and while they determine themselves, he doth determine not against, nor without, but in and with their own self-determination. And when this influence of God is said to be irresistible, it is not meant that God compelleth or forceably carryeth the the Creatures to act; but that he doth so effectually influence and govern them, as that, which way soever they take, or what act soever they please to act, it is that and no other, which he in a natural way, as the first Mover inclines them to, and as the Sovereign Lord and Disposer of all, appointed from eternity, should be for his own most Holy Ends: In all this natural agents are naturally determined according to their nature; and free Agents, Men, and Angel, determine themselves, according to their own reason and motives; they deliberate, they waver, and roll things in their thoughts, to and fro as much as they please; this experience affirmeth. We only assert, that in all this there is an influence of God conducting them, and that whatever they resolve upon at last; it is that, to which God did determine them. Moreover, As sin entred
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entred into the World, by Gods leaving man to himself when he was tempted and withholding his assisting grace from him at that instant ; so all other sins are occasioned by mans being left to his own corrupt will in those cases ; but that hindreth not, but that God the Author of Nature may guide and influence all the actions of the Creatures, as proceeding from their natural principles, for natural ends ; though he suffer the Creature to mix their Moral Impotency with, and to shew it in those very acts. Now let us see whether all, or most that the Author alledgeth for the excuse of Prescience, may not be applied to Predetermination.

*Sect. 8.
Pag 50.
52, &c.*

And First he saith, *There is no contradiction apparent or real betwixt prescience of sin, and pre-
cautions against it, betwixt these two propositions,
you will sin and you ought not to sin.*

Ans. Nor is there any real contradiction betwixt the prohibition of sin, and predeterminations to the natural actions to which sin cleaveth ; and when the terms are rightly explained there is no appearance of contradiction ; that God should prohibit all the violations of his Laws, and yet guide and rule men in their natural being and actions, which are from himself, hath no face of inconsistency ; and if it be enlarged into propositions ; it amounteth but to this, *God forbiddeth men to break his Laws ; and yet whatever act man doth, God doth incline and determine him to it in and by his own self determination*, as it is an exercise of the natural principles, which God gave ; and as it is a tendency to the end of nature

ture, which God designeth, though he knoweth, that man will sin in that action, and purposeth not to hinder it.

Secondly, He saith, *Prescience doth not nullifie Mans obligation to Obedience, or the difference betwixt good and evil, and that there is no connexion betwixt these two; Man may sin, because God knows he will sin.* Sect. 9.
P. 54-55.

Ans. Nor doth Predetermination nullifie mans duty or the difference betwixt good and evil: Gods Law being the sole rule of Mans Obedience, and not what he doth in or with man; nor is this a tolerable consequence: *God doth thus and thus, and his act is holy and good; therefore man may do the same, and his action would be holy also:* If it be said God, as the Fountain of Being and Activity, effectually influenceth men in all their actions as natural; therefore men may join their immoralities to, and mix them with those actions; where is the connexion?

Thirdly, He thinketh, that it excuseth Prescience to say, *Though God foreknow men will not do their duty, yet it is not unfit for God to do what is becoming him: and though his Laws should not attain their immediate and natural end, viz. the Obedience of Man, yet they should attain a more noble end, the decorum of his Government, and to declare the Holiness and Purity of God, the Wisdom and equality of all his Precepts.* Sect. 11.
Pag. 60. 64

Ans. In like manner, though God (who is here confessed to be the ultimate end of all things, and to do all for his own glory) doth inwardly Pag. 62.
and

and effectually move and guide all men in all their actions, for his own most Wise and Supream Ends, yet his Laws are all suited to a rational nature, and fitted for the ends and good of Humane Society, and for the eternal happiness of Man, and hereby declare his Wisdom and Goodness they strictly forbid every evil, *i. e. Whatsoever is contrary either to the Majestie of God the Supream Governour, or the good of Men as fellow Subjects to him*: and here appeareth the Holiness and Purity of his Nature and Laws; and further, he dealeth with men as rational and free Agents, revealing his Laws to them, giving them all rational satisfaction concerning the equity and reasonableness of them, and all rational motives for their obedience to them; and when they commit any thing against them it is of their own free choice, not by his perswasion or instigation: Thus far of the Wisdom of Gods Laws, which he foreknew would not be kept. Now to clear his sincerity in desiring the Salvation of Men, in compliance with his Laws, which yet was foreknown would not be attained in most Men.

Sect. 12.
Pag. 66.

He saith First, *That this end is attained in many Men, in all Ages, and Places, where these Laws are known, which is enough to declare the sincerity of Gods Intentions in promulgating his Laws.*

Ans. And doth not this also clear predetermination from being any violence to mans nature, and from necessitating the Breach of Gods Law, because that Law is no where promulgated, but it doth prevail in some for the Obedience of Faith? seeing also it can no more be said, that
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any are obedient and saved, who God foreknew would not be saved : Then, that any should be so whom he doth not effectually determine to good ; but doth determine those actions by which they wrong their own souls.

Secondly, Nor doth Predetermination prejudice Sovereign Grace in doing more for one than another (as is pleaded for Prescience) but rather excuseth it from the imputations of force and causing of sin : for though God do equally determine all the creatures in all their actions, only agreeably to the nature of each, yet where he pleaseth, he preventeth sin, and maketh those actions good and holy in some, which in others are wicked, by their own fault, though he predetermine all alike to their natural actions, yet when he pleaseth he superaddeth something more to purifie them from that Contagion, which else would cleave to them from the Creature.

Thirdly, Nor doth God say to any, or to all men, he will predetermine them to those actions, wherein he will suffer them to sin (as is pleaded) but God declareth one general, holy Law to all Men, whereby they must act and be judged, according to which he will faithfully reward and punish them : and further tells them, they have nothing to do with his secret purposes and actions.

Fourthly, Nor is Predetermination inconsistent with Gods Will of saving all men, and his importuning them to return to him ; (as is well explained) for God unfeignedly approveth of obedience to his Laws, and the Salvation of Man, and speaking after the manner of Men, persuadeth them to Obedience, resolving to deale with them according

Self. 14.

Pag. 74.

Self. 15.

Pag. 78.

Self. 16 17

18. Pag. 81

to the 99.

according to his Promises, though he do govern them in all their actions, even in those wherein he suffereth them to sin.

Fifthly, In what follows, to *Section 27* there is nothing opposite to Predetermination, only its too *Platonically* discoursed *Sect. 24. 25. that God foreseeth innumerable congruities in things, by which his government and administrations are guided, which are more then a Law to him; and against any of which it is impossible he should act, &c.* this is to suppose connexions and tendencies in things antecedent to Gods willing of them; and then he is not the absolute First Being or Fountain of all others; and also to make his will dependent upon the nature of his own Creatures, since from them and their proportions, he must take the measures of his Laws and Government. and how then is he the absolute Sovereign? how shall all the reason of the Creatures Obedience be resolved into the Preceptive Will of God? seeing there is higher reason then that, and which rules that, even the intrinsical congruity, of things among themselves, which is a Law and rule to the Divine Will; and if it be said, *That God first appointeth by make things, and then beholds the congruities and goodness of them* (as he did in the Creation) then his Will and Decree is before the provision of any such congruity; and the Author of it, and that being the effect of his will, can be no Law or Rule to it, unless accidentally; as God can do nothing unbecoming himself, as it would be to do and undo, to make Creatures, and then manage them ordinarily in a way unsuitable to their natures, to say, that God is determined

terminated by any thing foreseen in the nature of the Creatures, without respect to his preceding Decree, concerning their natures, and qualities, is to assert a *Stoical Fate*, which ruleth God himself, or *Platonical Ideas* coeternal with God, and independent on him, as *Aristot.* reports them.

6. It is pleaded, *That it was most fit, that God should govern rationall Creatures, ordinarily by Moral means, i. e. laws, persuasions, &c.* which doth as well agree to predetermination as to prescience: for God doth determine according to their own natures and by themselves; that as divine concurrence is not distinct from the act of the will; but the wills own act, as influenced by the first cause; so Divine Predetermination is not distinct from mans Determination of himself, but that same determination, as dependent on, and influenced by the Supream First Mover of all things. The Sum is, God doth determine men to their actions as reasonable Creatures, and by themselves, and in their own way, and by rational and moral means; only what God hath appointed, shall be done at last. And this is as reconcileable with Gods Moral Government, as Prescience is: if we cannot thoroughly conceive the manner of it: and if some of the effects seem unaccountable to us, and above our scant of Wisdom and Justice; it must be resolved into the infinite and absolutely Sovereignty of God, neither is this a *subterfuge* of ignorance, but the highest result of reason, *viz.* to acknowledge that if the nature and actions of God could be fully conceived by frail, especially corrupted, dark-

darkned understaudings, and if his actions could be measured by our measures of Wisdome and Justice, then he could not be infinite and so not God; Methinks we might allow God to be absolute, seing he is the Lord and Possessor of Heaven and Earth and there is no danger of his abusing his Government; why should we scruple to acknowledge him in all causes, and over all persons supreme Head and Governour? are sovereignty and liberty at variance here also? or are Gods Prerogatives and the creatures properly inconsistent? when the Creature hath nothing it can call its own, but both its self and all it hath is his: and then the creature attaineth its most noble and ultimate end; when it is most absolutely subiect to the will of God, and most entirely at his Disposall, and subservient to his ends: all things proceeded from God, and so far as they vary from him, and are at their own disposall, ther are as wrestless and as trembling, as the unsteady needle, when it hath lost the Pole: but when they return to him, and are united to him by an intire, direct and delightful subserviency to his pleasure, then have they found their Pole and Center, and will never contend to be at their own disposall or to be their own Masters and movers any more.

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